

1 Interview with PAUL A. SCHWARZBART  
2 Holocaust Media Project  
3 Date: 5/16/90 Place: San Francisco  
4 Interviewer: Barbara Harris  
5 Emily Silverman  
6 Transcriber: Katherine Wayne  
7

8 Q IT IS MAY 16TH, 1990. WE'RE AT THE HOLOCAUST  
9 CENTER OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA IN SAN FRANCISCO. MY NAME IS  
10 BARBARA HARRIS AND I'M INTERVIEWING PAUL SCHWARZBART FOR THE  
11 HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT. ALSO HELPING WITH THE  
12 INTERVIEW TODAY IS EMILY SILVERMAN.

13 GOOD MORNING, MR. SCHWARZBART.

14 A Good morning.

15 Q I'D LIKE TO START THIS MORNING BY ASKING YOU TO  
16 TELL ME -- GIVE ME SOME PERSONAL BACKGROUND, A LITTLE BIT  
17 ABOUT WHERE YOU WERE BORN, THE DATE OF YOUR BIRTH AND YOUR  
18 FAMILY.

19 A I was born in Vienna on April 12th, 1933. My  
20 parents were Sarah Schwarzbart and my father was Friedrich  
21 Schwarzbart. My father was Viennese born. As a matter of  
22 fact, my whole family have been in Vienna since the 1700's,  
23 so it's -- it's an old, old Austrian family, Schwarzbart  
24 meaning black beard, and the rest of my family, I had a  
25 maternal grandmother and a paternal grandmother. My father  
26 had four sisters. My mother had one sister.

27 That's the immediate family.

28 Q WHAT DID YOUR FATHER DO FOR A LIVING?

A My father worked for an import-export company. In  
the German records that I unearthed two years ago in the

1 archives in Brussels, all the documentation was there and  
2 they call him which is officeworker, clerk with a  
3 capital "C", I suppose. That sort of thing.

4 My mother was a modiste, which means that she had  
5 been schooled to design and make hats.

6 What is the matter, Emily?

7 MS. SILVERMAN: MY FAMILY MADE -- NO, I'LL SHUT UP.

8 MS. HARRIS:

9 Q AND DID YOUR MOTHER WORK ALSO?

10 A No, not in Vienna.

11 Q WAS YOUR FAMILY WELL-OFF?

12 A I suppose we were well-off. We had our own  
13 apartment and my mother was home taking care of me. I  
14 suppose that would mean that we were well-off. Good  
15 middle-class family, I think.

16 Q DO YOU REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT YOUR JEWISH -- THE  
17 UPBRINGING YOU HAD IN VIENNA?

18 A Well, you know, I left Vienna at the age of five,  
19 so my recollections are mainly of family life and certainly  
20 of Jewishness, but nothing formal.

21 Q WERE YOU IN AN OBSERVANT HOME?

22 A I remember the Shabbat, yes.

23 Q CAN YOU TELL ME A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THAT?

24 A No. You know, that is very, very dim. I remember  
25 the candles and I remember singing and I remember happiness  
26 and being very much aware of my Jewishness somehow, but  
27 that's really in retrospect, but I was too young for any --  
28 anything else. There was no or anything like that.

1 Q DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD YOU  
2 LIVED IN? WAS IT A JEWISH NEIGHBORHOOD?

3 A Well, no, it wasn't really essentially a Jewish  
4 neighborhood. We lived in an apartment building across the  
5 street from -- from the local school, public school, and my  
6 grandmother lived about two streets away, perhaps three, and  
7 she had a tailor shop which she had taken over from my  
8 grandfather when he died, so she ran the tailor shop, and  
9 it's interesting, because her maiden name was Snider, which  
10 of course means tailor, and that's a bit of humor. But  
11 that's how names originated anyway.

12 So I remember Jewish families; I remember Jewish  
13 friends, but it wasn't a Jewish neighborhood like I ran into  
14 afterwards.

15 Q WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT -- YOU SAID YOU LEFT AT  
16 THE AGE OF FIVE.

17 A Yes.

18 Q WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT LEAVING VIENNA, THE  
19 CIRCUMSTANCES?

20 A Oh, that's very clear. From that time on, things  
21 are very, very clear. The times of relaxation and happiness,  
22 the first five years of my life, are just a happy blur with  
23 certain outstanding experiences, but other than that, I think  
24 a happy blur is a good way of describing it.

25 But the documentary you were alluding to before, I  
26 stated that one day I looked out the window and the school  
27 flag, the Austrian flag that always flew over the school, had  
28 been replaced by what I now know as the Nazi flag and from

1       that time on, things went downhill.

2               My father was kicked out of his job. I still have  
3       that letter, very polite letter, not stating anything other  
4       than political reasons and the regret of the company to have  
5       to lose such a valued employee after so many years, but that  
6       it was out of their hands. Protecting themselves. I don't  
7       blame them.

8               And then our apartment which belonged to us was  
9       confiscated and given to someone else and then neighbors and  
10      people that we had known all these years, including the kids  
11      I always played with, you know, were all wearing the Swastika  
12      button in their lapels and we were told, you know, "  
13      get out, get off the sidewalk," and there was a lot of  
14      discussing going on in the house and I was really too young  
15      to comprehend that, although I grew up overnight after that,  
16      and my parents decided to get out of Austria and I remember  
17      we made our way to Cologne, Germany.

18              I do not remember how, but I'm certain it had to  
19      have been by train. That was the only way to travel. We  
20      never owned a car, so I know it was -- it had to have been by  
21      train, but I remember arriving at Cologne and a little hotel  
22      with nothing but Jews in it, you know.

23              From that time on, my association was a very close  
24      one with other Jews, and I wasn't in on the discussions, of  
25      course. I was five years old, but I remember my father  
26      leaving and my mother saying that we would see him again in a  
27      few days.

28              What had happened, as I understood afterwards, was

1       that the guides that Jews hired for -- to take them across  
2       the borders -- in this case, into Belgium -- didn't handle  
3       both men, women and children. They fell in two categories.  
4       Certain guides took men, certain guides took women and  
5       children, so my father was gone. This was in the wintertime,  
6       and he had to go through a difficult route and ours was  
7       supposed to be easier, and a whole group of women and  
8       children, my mother and myself, and we left Cologne in the  
9       night and across fields and so forth and we were caught. We  
10      were caught by -- by -- not by the Germans, but by the  
11      Belgian gendarmerie, and their policy was simply to turn you  
12      back.

13                So we did not run into any problems other than  
14      being turned back, and we were back in Cologne. I don't know  
15      how my mother managed it, because I thought she'd spent  
16      everything we had on the first guide, but some -- she was a  
17      very great woman. Somehow she managed to find another guide  
18      and another group and we did try again. In the meantime, I  
19      remember developing an ear infection. Bizaare, the things  
20      you remember, and my mother at night pouring warm oil into my  
21      ear to ease the pain. It works, too.

22                And we tried again and that -- that little trip, I  
23      remember distinctly because there was a woman with some very  
24      small children and my mother was carrying one or two of her  
25      babies, and I at the age of five was walking in the snow. I  
26      had little boots on, and so I guess that's the night I  
27      stopped being a child, because I was on my own, you know.  
28      Mamma was helping somebody else, and we were chased and dogs

1 and things, I remember that, but we made it. We made it  
2 across the border and once you made it, the policy of the  
3 Belgians was if you made it, they allowed you to stay, if  
4 they didn't catch you in the act.

5 It was very interesting. I think it was almost an  
6 official policy, because I've heard the same story from so  
7 many people. What they had organized in Belgian then were  
8 labor camps. Not concentration camps, labor camps for  
9 actual -- actual labor, felling trees. I forget what else,  
10 things that needed to be done. Poor small country, and so if  
11 a member of the family was willing to give of himself, then  
12 the rest of the family obtained a residence permit.

13 So of course, my father went to one of those labor  
14 camps -- I have the vague recollection of six weeks -- and  
15 paid with his body for the privilege of remaining in this  
16 free country.

17 No work permits were issued, of course. You were  
18 not allowed to work, but you could not be at the public  
19 charge, and it's -- I don't know what they expected people to  
20 do, you know. Thinking about it now -- I never did then, of  
21 course -- but thinking about it now, how people are expected  
22 to survive unless they bring funds in with them.

23 We were not among those, unfortunately. You have  
24 to have an apartment, you have to be off the street. You  
25 registered with the police. It's very strictly controlled.  
26 You cannot be a vagrant. I remember some of the souvenirs of  
27 the time which really stand out.

28 For instance, there's a law in Belgium that when

1       you take -- there was, I don't know if there still is -- if  
2       you take an apartment, curtains must go up immediately.  
3       Windows have to be covered in an occupied apartment. I  
4       remember my mother on the floor ironing what passed for  
5       curtains and putting them up.

6                 She found work. As I said, she was a very great  
7       lady when it came to her family. Extremely bright woman.  
8       She found work with a well-to-do Belgian Jewish family and  
9       worked for them as a housekeeper. Totally Underground, of  
10      course, it was, and so we were able to subsist until my  
11      father returned and then after that, too, because he was not  
12      allowed to work, you know, and was -- men are much more  
13      visible than women, somehow.

14                And, well, I guess that's the answer to your  
15      question.

16                Q       DO YOU REMEMBER THOSE TIMES AS BEING FRIGHTENING  
17      TIMES?

18                A       Oh, no, not at all. No, once we were in Belgium,  
19      you know, with my parents being re-united with -- both my  
20      parents; for a while just my mother -- and having met other  
21      members of the family -- for instance, my -- one of my  
22      father's sisters had married and her husband had a very large  
23      family in Vienna, an extremely large family. Much, much  
24      larger -- several sisters and marriages and so forth, and  
25      that entire family lived about a block away from where we  
26      lived.

27                So I had a lot of family to go to and spend a day  
28      with even while Mama -- mother was away working. I remember

1 that so distinctly, and by then, I turned six, I was getting  
2 ready for school.

3 I would qualify those times as happy times, yes.

4 Q HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO WALK INTO BELGIUM? HOW  
5 LONG WERE YOU AND YOUR MOTHER ON THE ROAD WITH THIS GUIDE?

6 A You know, I only remember one night, but that's  
7 from the perspective of a five-year-old. I remember that one  
8 night, the snow, the dogs and so forth and that -- that's  
9 all. Whether it's accurate or not, I can't tell you, because  
10 my mother and I never talked about it.

11 Q DID YOU HAVE LUGGAGE? DID YOU HAVE BELONGINGS WITH  
12 YOU, ANYTHING FAMILIAR?

13 A We must have. Oh, I know what I had. I had a  
14 backpack, because my grandmother, my father's mother, had  
15 given me that backpack as a present. Not at that time,  
16 because by then she had died, but one or two years before  
17 that. You know, Austrians are hikers and things like that,  
18 so a backpack is a precious present to a child, and this was  
19 given to me without ever knowing that it would be used to  
20 flee.

21 And I had that little leather backpack for a long  
22 time, so I know I had that and my mother must have had  
23 something else.

24 Q AFTER YOUR PARENTS WERE RE-UNITED, DO YOU REMEMBER,  
25 WAS FOOD AVAILABLE AND DID YOU GO ON TO GO TO SCHOOLING IN  
26 BRUSSELS?

27 A Yes. Yes. Those were days -- actually, a year --  
28 where I spent most of my time, if not all of my time, with my



1 father. My father of course not being able to work or do  
2 anything, just took care of me and we became very, very, very  
3 close.

4 Q WHAT WAS A TYPICAL DAY LIKE?

5 A Walking Mother to work. It was only two or three  
6 blocks, but it seemed farther, and then going to the park,  
7 visiting our family. My father teaching me to write. I  
8 wrote a lot of letters to my aunts in Austria still at that  
9 time. By writing, I mean copying what my father had written,  
10 but in my own hand, and so when I -- when I finally went to  
11 school, I knew how to write, basically to read.

12 Q DID YOU SPEND -- YOU SAID YOU SPENT A YEAR IN  
13 BRUSSELS.

14 A No, well, I'm talking about -- when I said that I  
15 spent time with my father alone like that, you see, because  
16 now, I'm talking '39 to '40 and in -- in '40 is when I saw  
17 him for the last time, but I went -- I went to school in  
18 1939. I started school, which was again about a block away  
19 from where we lived, and every morning, my father would take  
20 me to the entrance, to the courtyard, and then in the  
21 afternoon when I was let out, he'd be waiting for me, and one  
22 of my teachers with whom I corresponded for years said he  
23 would never forget my father because he saw him twice a day,  
24 and I suppose in a sense that was unusual, because children  
25 are picked up -- brought by women and picked up by women, you  
26 know. Men are away at work. Our situation was reversed, and  
27 so I remember that so distinctly, so clearly.

28 Q DO YOU REMEMBER MUCH ABOUT THE SCHOOL? WAS IT

1 YOUR -- THE FIRST YEAR IN SCHOOL, WAS IT DIFFICULT? WERE  
2 MOST OF THE CHILDREN JEWISH IN YOUR SCHOOL?

3 A No. No to both questions. No, I didn't think it  
4 was difficult. I've always loved school, and no, most of the  
5 children were not Jewish. Over -- let's put it this way: If  
6 they were, being Jewish or being something else was not your  
7 claim to fame. You were not hiding it. It's just like here  
8 normally. You meet somebody, you say "Are you a Catholic or  
9 are you a Protestant, what are you?" It doesn't seem to  
10 matter until something else happens.

11 But of course, I was starting school in first grade  
12 with a language which really wasn't my own and I remember my  
13 teacher very well because he was very patient, and I remember  
14 finishing that year at the top of my class, which made us all  
15 very proud, and made the teacher very proud.

16 This teacher, rather than saying, you know, "Here's  
17 a foreigner who is bypassing the native kids," felt this was  
18 fantastic and always talked about it and always held me up as  
19 an example. I was never embarrassed. That's when I lost my  
20 modesty, I think.

21 Q THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A COMPLIMENT FROM A TEACHER TO  
22 HELP YOU DO THAT.

23 A It's wonderful. It's wonderful.

24 Q SO YOU HAD A VERY POSITIVE EXPERIENCE IN SCHOOL?

25 A Very, very positive. Except for singing. I  
26 remember I adored this teacher, I still do, and singing --  
27 they call you by your last name. I remember him saying  
28 "Schwarzbart," which is the way the Belgians pronounce it,

1 "Mr. Schwarzbart, don't sing," and I've been unwilling to  
2 sing in public ever since, interestingly enough, but I can't  
3 carry a tune, so he knew what he was saying.

4 Q '39 WAS THE YEAR THAT THE WAR BEGAN WHEN GERMANY  
5 WENT TO WAR WITH POLAND.

6 A Right.

7 Q DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT THAT?

8 A No, no. I remember vaguely my parents being shaken  
9 up by the news and so forth, but it did in no way touch me.  
10 You know, it was not part of my daily life, not at all.

11 Belgian was peaceful, I was going to school, I was  
12 doing a lot of homework, because, you know -- I know you know  
13 in Europe, even first grade means homework and school is a  
14 very serious thing, and visiting with the family a block away  
15 and I remember all the trips my father was taking to Antwerp,  
16 which was half an hour away by electric train, because that's  
17 where the American consulate was located and we were waiting  
18 for our visa --- visas to go to the United States and  
19 periodically, my father would be going over there, always  
20 coming back with the same answer, "Not yet, not yet, not  
21 yet." That, I remember.

22 But no, not the war situation. Excuse me.

23 Q DID YOU ALSO CONTINUE TO HAVE SHABBAT DINNERS ON  
24 FRIDAY?

25 A Yes. My mother, working for this well-to-do Jewish  
26 family, would bring back treasures for Shabbat, you know,  
27 because she had been cooking up a storm for them and they  
28 were very observant, so she was always released very early on

1 Friday and came home with very special food that she had  
2 cooked and she was always given our share, which was very,  
3 very nice.

4 Again, in retrospect, you know. I think that we  
5 survived on meager fare, but nothing that ever affected me as  
6 such, but, you know, looking back, it was.

7 Q THEN IN 1940, THE WAR CAME TO BELGIUM.

8 A Yeah. Well, in 1940, in May of 1940, all hell  
9 broke loose. The British were using -- and perhaps there  
10 were some French, but I remember the British, because they're  
11 very distinctive helmets, you know, those flat Tommy helmets.  
12 Kids remember those sort of things.

13 They were using my school as barracks, you know,  
14 , so there was an awful lot of troop movement, and we  
15 lived on the fourth floor, very good view of the school, and  
16 I could see all that movement, and the population, everyone  
17 was extremely excited. There was a lot of excitement in the  
18 air and it wasn't very positive, and I remember people  
19 talking about paratroopers and pointing to little dots in the  
20 sky. That's all I ever saw, were dots in the sky. I didn't  
21 really know and I don't think I really understood what  
22 paratroopers were.

23 And I remember the morning of the 10th, because the  
24 noise -- 10th of May was six days ago. It's not a day of  
25 celebration, but the 8th of May was two days before that.  
26 That's a day of celebration, 1945. That's when the Germans  
27 gave up, so the month of May is really very interesting.

28 But I remember that morning getting up and my

1 parents talking and my -- we slept in the same room -- being  
2 very impressed by the lack of noise. It was a very quiet  
3 morning. It was -- it was the sounds of the tomb. We looked  
4 out and there was nobody in the streets and the doors of the  
5 school stood open and it looked very empty, and it was. The  
6 troops had all moved out during the night.

7 And we went to visit the family across the way and  
8 that afternoon is when the police came to our house and  
9 arrested my father for being Austrian. Same thing as we  
10 Americans did to our Japanese-Americans. It's not the same  
11 thing, because we did it to our own people. They were doing  
12 it to foreigners. I think I can understand their actions  
13 better than our own here.

14 And so they arrested my father for being an  
15 Austrian. It was a terrible thing. They arrested about  
16 10,000 men and most of those men were Jews who were fleeing  
17 from the Nazis, and I think that the government should have  
18 done something about that and not just mass arrest everyone  
19 who had a Germanic background, because they knew from our  
20 registrations from the police when we had come and why we had  
21 come. I understand of course that spies could have hidden  
22 under that guise, too, but they paid no attention to that and  
23 so this was really what it came down to, was a mass arrest of  
24 Jews, of Jewish men, by the police.

25 I remember that it was not brutal or forceful or  
26 anything. Just a very matter-of-fact type of thing. You  
27 know, you say " , but you must please accompany  
28 us." There were quite a few of them. I remember the white

1 helmets. The Belgian police had white helmets, and there  
2 were civilian police, and there were enough men there to make  
3 sure that they could take care of him, and he just walked  
4 away.

5 And then my mother and I went to the police station  
6 and we were allowed to bring him some clothing, because, you  
7 know, they just took him as-is.

8 And we had no idea what was going on. I certainly  
9 didn't. But I don't think any of us knew what was going on.

10 And that was May 10th, 1940, and that's the last  
11 time I saw my father.

12 Q DID YOU SEE HIM AT THE POLICE STATION WHEN YOU TOOK  
13 THE CLOTHING?

14 A Oh, yes. Yes, he was locked up in the courtyard  
15 with a small bunch of other men. I knew quite a few of them  
16 and everybody thought, you know, "We're going away for a few  
17 days and they're going to realize what they've done, that we  
18 are not spies. I mean, we are running from these people  
19 also."

20 So --- but that was not to be.

21 Q DID HE SAY ANYTHING TO YOU AND YOUR MOTHER AT THAT  
22 TIME, GIVE YOU ANY INSTRUCTIONS?

23 A Oh, yeah. He was extremely optimistic. He was a  
24 very optimistic man and he was trying to boost our morale and  
25 I remember he told me, he said, "Paulinka, you're the man of  
26 the family now. Take good care of -- I'll be back soon, but  
27 in the meantime, you're the man." You know, I was seven  
28 years old. Yeah.

1           Q     HAVING HAD THAT TIME TO FORM SUCH A CLOSE  
2     RELATIONSHIP, YOU MUST HAVE BEEN VERY SHAKEN UP WHEN YOU SAW  
3     YOUR FATHER LED AWAY BY POLICEMEN. DO YOU REMEMBER --

4           A     Oh, I was extremely shaken up, but it stopped  
5     there, because I had -- who in his wildest imagination would  
6     think that they're taking your father away forever. You  
7     know, he hadn't done anything, you know. That's I think how  
8     you approach that, and I must have been sure that he would be  
9     coming home soon, and that this was just a terrible momentary  
10    thing. My mother was much more I think distressed. She may  
11    have realized that there was more involved.

12          Q     WHERE DID THEY TAKE YOUR FATHER ULTIMATELY?

13          A     They took him to -- because he wrote right away.  
14    They took him to holding camps and from there, they sent all  
15    these people into the -- into the Pyrenees, and he went to  
16    infamous camps such as                               places which today  
17    are very much on the map of history, which were unknown names  
18    to any of us at the time, and he started writing as soon as  
19    he was able to.

20                These were forced labor camps. I found out  
21    subsequently really that they were run by the French of the  
22    Vichy government and these people were just in some respects  
23    worse than the Germans with one exception, they did not have  
24    the executions, but they treated them very, very badly, and  
25    my father wrote over a period of two years, steadily, and the  
26    letters were always of course opened by the Germans and  
27    censored, but nothing was taken out of the letters, nothing  
28    was cut out, nothing was erased, you know, because I have the

1 letters.

2 Of course, he didn't say anything in those letters  
3 that would have been detrimental to them, and we wrote back  
4 for those two years and I think we were very hopeful that he  
5 would soon be coming home and that then we would just have to  
6 fend for ourselves and it would be the three of us trying to  
7 save our lives.

8 The Germans pretty well lulled the population of  
9 Belgium into an almost false state of blissful ignorance.  
10 People were being taken away all the time, but they were  
11 supposedly going to labor camps and since nobody came back to  
12 tell you differently, that's what people thought. They  
13 did -- they weren't quite willing to go, but it was nowhere  
14 near the truth and so, even though this was not a thing you  
15 wanted to do, you never thought of it as the end of anything.

16 And we -- you know, we were yelling -- yelling --  
17 wearing the yellow star and we had our marching baggage  
18 always ready, because that was the word, you know. You had  
19 to have your backpack ready so that if they knocked on the  
20 door, you just went. I mean, that's it, and you were being  
21 sent east to go to work.

22 No indication of anything. Oh, they were emptying  
23 whole buildings, but you thought that they were going to  
24 labor camps. That whole family of my -- of my uncle's was  
25 taken -- that entire building across the way was emptied and  
26 not one person of that building returned. It's I think four  
27 or five floors, including his entire family, and I found out  
28 two years ago.



1           Everything happened at the archives in Belgium two  
2 years ago. I just looked up -- I was -- first of all, if I  
3 may jump ahead for a moment, I never knew that the archives  
4 really existed, but I always was under the impression that if  
5 archives exist in different countries, they deal with the  
6 inhabitants of that particular country.

7           The Belgium -- the Belgians handle it differently.  
8 They archived all the documents of anybody who was taken from  
9 their country, which is an interesting way of doing it, and  
10 so when I got to those archives, when I would never have  
11 thought of looking for family, because none of us were  
12 Belgians, I was told "But they were taken from here, so they  
13 have to be in the archives," so I looked up this part of the  
14 family and found all little Gestapo files in one neat little  
15 bundle, because they all had the same name, and all taken to  
16 Auschwitz and all gassed, you know. All of them except for  
17 one young cousin who -- something, he was taken to the  
18 hospital for experimentation.

19           They were very proud of their recordkeeping, but we  
20 were talking about the 10th of May, and that time.

21           My father was finally -- in 1942, Pierre Laval was  
22 the prime minister of the Vichy government -- and I hope that  
23 if anybody rots in hell, this man does. I don't often say  
24 that. I remember, parenthetically, when I came to this  
25 country and became involved with academia and I heard about  
26 Laval University in Canada, I couldn't believe that any place  
27 of learning would have that name. But of course, it's not  
28 the same Laval. It's not Pierre Laval at all, I'm happy to

1 report to you.

2 He simply took all those thousands and thousands  
3 and thousands and thousands of Jews who were in those labor  
4 camps and gave them to the Germans and so, he must have had  
5 an enormous population, ready-made population for that  
6 concentration camp. Simply loaded them up.

7 My father threw his last letter out the window at  
8 the Galerie de Leon in France, saying, you know, "I'm on my  
9 way and I'll write as soon as I can," and some good Samaritan  
10 found that piece of paper and forwarded it to my mother. Had  
11 the address on it, of course, but it was a very lucky thing,  
12 but that's the last time we heard from him. After that, you  
13 know, it was Auschwitz and Grossrosen and then he finally was  
14 killed in Buchenwald, as I found out, less than two months  
15 before the liberation of the camp.

16 So my poor father, Friedrich Schwarzbart, survived  
17 literally five years of hell to die just before the end. The  
18 documents that I found two years ago in the archives are very  
19 explicit, you know. He'd been on the death march and his  
20 feet had frozen and sepsis had settled in, so essentially,  
21 you know, it was blood poisoning. But 5:30 in the morning,  
22 Sunday the 18th of February, 1945 is when his life ended at  
23 the age of 42.

24 It's incredible.

25 Q UNTIL THAT TIME, HAD HE -- THEY HAD HAD HIM WORKING  
26 ALL THOSE YEARS?

27 A Yeah.

28 Q IN LABOR CAMPS?

1           A     Yes.

2           Q     DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY HAD HIM DOING?

3           A     No. I do not remember, but as I'm preparing to  
4 reread that volume of correspondence, I may find out.

5           Q     YOU HAVEN'T READ THE LETTERS?

6           A     Oh, I read the letters -- my mother read them to me  
7 a long time ago, but I've not reread them except for the few  
8 that I read you in the documentary in the past 20 years, and  
9 I want to do a serious reading, perhaps editing the letters  
10 and giving some thought to that, because they're beautifully  
11 written.

12          Q     WHERE DID YOU AND YOUR MOTHER GO FROM -- AFTER MAY  
13 10TH?

14          A     Nowhere. On the way back from the police station,  
15 after having seen my father, as it turned out for the last  
16 time, we wandered the streets and my mother took me into a  
17 Red Cross station, a Belgian Red Cross station, to try to  
18 find out what was happening to these people, you know. Where  
19 was my father being sent and so forth, because they had no  
20 information, but the woman we talked to, a woman named Andre  
21 Estaing, somehow took pity on us and invited my mother and me  
22 to her house, and a lifelong relationship and friendship  
23 ensued and she gave -- you know, my mother was jobless,  
24 destitute and alone and this lady -- it was a teacher again,  
25 and she had two small children and she needed someone to take  
26 care of the two children, so she gave my mother a job rearing  
27 her children. So my mother did that throughout the war.

28                   They lived a block away from us, right exactly

1       midway between our house and the school, and mother spent all  
2       her days working there, you know, being a housekeeper and  
3       rearing the children and then at night, she'd go back to the  
4       apartment and I spent a great deal of time there, too. In  
5       1942, Jewish children were no longer allowed to go to school  
6       and that's when my first teacher, Josef Campi, retired. He  
7       was too young to retire, but he said if he couldn't teach  
8       everybody, he wouldn't teach anyone.

9               And from the time of May 10th until he retired --  
10       perhaps even subsequently, but I do not remember -- every day  
11       on his way to school, he would stop at the house and drop --  
12       and leave off a pack of sandwiches for me, because he knew  
13       that, you know, we were alone. Every day.

14              It's in 19 -- beginning of 1943 -- those two years,  
15       1941, 1942, as I said, were years of pain and hardships and  
16       many people being deported, but you didn't really live with  
17       the thought of immediate death, because I don't know if no  
18       one was aware of it, but I know that we weren't aware of the  
19       fact that people were being eliminated and we -- I think, you  
20       know -- my mother didn't want to go back to Germany with me,  
21       but I -- I believe that what she thought was these were labor  
22       camps that we might be sent to, forced labor, and we lived in  
23       dread of that, but it wasn't of the fear of immediate death  
24       except in the streets, sometimes, they would shoot people  
25       down and I saw things like that happening, and we feared that  
26       the mass raffles, you know, as the example I gave you, houses  
27       being emptied or streets being closed off and everybody who  
28       walked between the trucks were just simply put on the trucks.

1           Well, I saw it happen time and time and time again,  
2       but neither my mother nor I ever were victims of these and in  
3       the beginning of 1943, a man came to the house -- that, I  
4       remember vividly -- and he asked my mother whether she wanted  
5       to save my life, because things were going from bad to worse,  
6       and if she did want to save my life, I would simply have to  
7       go away with him, and he said he'd be back that afternoon or  
8       that evening for her answer.

9           So we went to see the Estaing family with whom we  
10      were so -- so friendly and we talked it over and they must  
11      have heard some things, too, because they said to my mother,  
12      you know, "Let Paul go." This sounds all so easy and cut and  
13      dried, but it wasn't, you know.

14          They even said that I could use their name because  
15      I couldn't go away under the name of Schwarzbart. So that  
16      day I became Paul Estaing, a good Belgian, and the man came  
17      back and my mother didn't have to get too much clothes ready,  
18      because our little bundle was always ready, as I said, but  
19      she had taken the stars off, and she said "Yes" to the man  
20      and he took me by the hand and we walked away, you know.

21          He put me on a train and he explained to me where I  
22      was going -- my mother was not allowed to know -- and  
23      reminded me that I had given up my Jewish identity, you know,  
24      and that I was someone else now.

25          I was 10 years old, not quite. But I understood.  
26      We understood. There were no kids left, you know, and then  
27      he walked away and really I never saw that man again. I have  
28      no idea who he is. We've tried to find out. No trace, just

1 an anonymous member of the Jewish Underground. I didn't know  
2 that either, but I found out two years ago that he was part  
3 of the Jewish Underground.

4 And that's how I went into hiding.

5 Q IT MUST HAVE BEEN VERY DIFFICULT FOR YOUR MOTHER TO  
6 LET YOU GO OFF WITH A COMPLETE STRANGER WHO SHE DIDN'T KNOW.

7 A I don't think the word "difficult" describes it.  
8 That, we have talked about many times, and we had talked  
9 about since then and I've talked with other people and I  
10 particularly talked to couriers, people who did that sort of  
11 thing, who took the children, and I met one with whom I  
12 became very friendly two years ago and she tells me that  
13 these women that she dealt with were so heartbroken that it  
14 was all she could do not to break down every time she took a  
15 child or children away, even though she knew that it was  
16 their only salvation, and she said very often afterwards,  
17 even in the streets, you would break down and cry because she  
18 said -- they all said, many of these women never saw the  
19 children again. The children were usually safe, but the  
20 mothers usually were not, you see. So . . .

21 Q WHAT WAS YOUR THINKING ABOUT YOUR MOTHER? DID YOU  
22 THINK YOU'D SEE HER?

23 A Yes, I was absolutely convinced that I would see  
24 both my father and my mother again. I think it was because  
25 my -- my parents always instilled such a feeling of optimism  
26 in me and they were both very, very strong and they formed a  
27 very good character in me and they taught me not to dwell on  
28 the negative, I think, you know. Plus the fact that we were

1 so ignorant, you know. When you're so ignorant of what is  
2 truly going on, why should you not be optimistic?

3 I mean, the world had never known what happened.  
4 It never happened before to that extent, so -- so you had no  
5 frame of reference. Why would you fear death let us say in a  
6 concentration camp when you didn't know that such things  
7 existed, you know?

8 Thinking back in retrospect, that anyone survived  
9 is truly miraculous because when you -- I don't know if you  
10 visited any of those archives, but the documentation that the  
11 Gestapo had on each of us is mind-boggling, and how my mother  
12 survived I shall never know, because they knew exactly where  
13 she was. All they had to do was go pick her up. They just  
14 didn't bother. There's no explanation for that sort of  
15 thing, you know.

16 Q AFTER SHE WENT BACK -- AFTER SHE LET YOU GO, SHE  
17 STAYED IN HER APARTMENT?

18 A She stayed in her apartment at night and worked for  
19 the Estaings during the day, and she was extremely stubborn  
20 about not leaving the apartment and -- "stubborn" perhaps is  
21 not the right word. Conscientious, because that was the only  
22 place that both my father and I could ever find her if we  
23 came looking, you know. She explained that to me. This was  
24 her thinking. It's very interesting.

25 She lived in tremendous fear throughout the war.  
26 It's a fear that defies description. In the apartment right  
27 next door to us -- there were two apartments on our floor --  
28 there was a Belgian lady, very nice lady, as I remember her,

1 but she was a prostitute. I shouldn't say "but." Very nice  
2 lady, but. That doesn't make any sense.

3 She was a very nice lady and she was a prostitute  
4 and she was a collaborator, and she entertained -- she didn't  
5 entertain too -- too many Belgian man who were not involved.  
6 She entertained SS, she entertained German soldiers, she  
7 entertained Belgians in their brown shirts, you know,  
8 collaborators; she entertained soldiers. And there was a  
9 constant up and down in the evening from the beginning of the  
10 Occupation.

11 And my mother said that many of these Germans  
12 addressed her in German. They knew full well who she was and  
13 they said " , good frau" in German, which in German --  
14 do you speak German? -- which is a form -- respectful form of  
15 address, and she said they were not being sarcastic.

16 Explain that, you know. She said she lost a year's  
17 life every time she saw one, especially when he spoke to her  
18 like that, but they had other things on their mind when they  
19 came there, I guess. Maybe that's what saved her life, I  
20 don't know. You know, I always wanted to explain that.

21 When I still lived there, I remember -- a bit of  
22 humor perhaps, you know -- but her bedroom was next to our  
23 bedroom, you know, and the walls are paper. At night, my  
24 mother would make me crawl in bed with her and put her hands  
25 over my ears, you know, protect my innocence.

26 Well, it's -- I smile today. I wasn't smiling at  
27 the time. Maybe I resented it. I don't know, but those are  
28 the realities of life, you know. You're facing death, but



1       you don't want your child to hear about sexual practices next  
2       door, you know.

3               Q       DID YOUR MOTHER HAVE ANY KIND OF CONTACT WITH THIS  
4       WOMAN, PERSONALLY?

5               A               . Hello and goodbye, you know. It  
6       wasn't a friendship or anything, just a passing in the halls,  
7       I think.

8       during the day when my mother was away anyway working, so I  
9       don't know. I remember her face, but not her name.

10              Q       WERE ANY OTHER PEOPLE IN THAT BUILDING TAKEN AWAY?  
11       DID YOU GO AWAY WITH ANY OTHER CHILDREN WHEN YOU LEFT?

12              A       No, no, I was by myself. Totally alone, and there  
13       no other Jews in this building, in that building, and --

14                               IT'S GO BACK TO THE STRANGE MAN WHO TOOK YOU AWAY.

15

16  
17              Yeah, I remember it was evening. Whether this is a  
18       correct remembrance or not, I don't know, but that's -- I  
19       remember darkness and I remember taking the streetcar and  
20       going to the Luxembourg train station and getting ready to  
21       board a train. That's when he told me my destination very  
22       simply and said, you know, the equivalent of "Take care of  
23       yourself" sort of thing and, you know, he didn't say too many  
24       things. He implied many things because he had to be careful.  
25       After all, his life was in jeopardy too while he was standing  
26       there talking to me.

27              All these -- these heroic young people -- they were  
28       all very young, you know -- young men and women who took it

*Tape bad  
these spots*

1 upon themselves to save kids -- I'm speaking with what I know  
2 today, of course -- and who would just go around, pick up  
3 kids and take them to trains and make them board. I wonder  
4 how many of them were caught in the act and of course, that  
5 meant death, you know, I know that now, for both or all  
6 three.

7 This woman Andre Escovitz, who I spoke about  
8 earlier and whom I met for the first time two years ago, she  
9 was a Belgian schoolteacher also, a very young schoolteacher,  
10 not Jewish, who saw pupils disappearing day in, day out, you  
11 know, not showing up in classes and that's how she found out  
12 what was going on and decided she needed to do something  
13 about it, so she joined the Underground and started taking  
14 children to safe houses.

15 She was very good at that, I found out, and she  
16 also had an out. She was a licensed schoolteacher. She had  
17 a reason for being on the streets with kids, you know. Some  
18 of these other people, if they'd been stopped, you know,  
19 "This is not your child. What are you doing," you know. It  
20 would be very simple, but she had a cover and she was very  
21 active in the Underground. I saw her books, her notebooks  
22 and I saw the pictures. She must have saved so many kids.

23 Interesting aside, after the war, she married a  
24 Jew, Escovitz, an attorney, practicing attorney in Brussels.  
25 They raised their children as Jews. She never converted in a  
26 temple, but I bet she's a better Jewess than many Jewish-born  
27 women. Wonderful lady, and she's the one that told me, "Hey,  
28 Paul, quit wondering about the past. Go and find out for

1       sure."

2               Because I said "I wonder, why did they pick me?"  
3       So she is the one who told me about the archives and I went  
4       to the archives with one thing in mind, to find the notebooks  
5       of the Jewish Underground and to see if I'm in them. I  
6       didn't know about anything else, and called the archives and  
7       the woman in charge of that particular aspect was on  
8       vacation. They said "Come back -- you know, call again next  
9       week." I said "I'm from America and I'm leaving in two  
10      days." They said "No problem, come."

11              So I went -- this is not run by Jews, you know. I  
12      mean, the archives are run by the Minister -- Ministry of  
13      Justice. Met this marvelous young civil employee named  
14      Claire Baed, and she had gone -- there were four notebooks  
    that the Jewish Underground was running, four notebooks and

*Bad  
tape*

        You needed all four notebooks to make any sense.  
        a, they were carried by different people, and sure  
        I'm part of history, believe it or not. She said,  
20      you are," you know, "number 896, Paul Schwarzbart,  
21      born April 12th." They left off the '33, and then you look  
22      in the second notebook and you look under 896, which was the  
23      code number, and it said Paul Estaing, my false name, and you  
24      needed both of those to make any sense.

25              So simple, it's so clever, and then one with the  
26      address and then another one with the number 611 and 611 was  
27      the little village of Jamoigne, where I was in hiding.

28              So those notebooks are incredible, you know.

1 They're just -- they kept track. I imagine that they wanted  
2 this for after the war, to find the kids in case the parents  
3 were no longer around, you know, but I had no contact with  
4 anyone after that initial night where I was taken to the  
5 train station, you know.

6 So it's -- there was absolutely no follow-up to  
7 this. And it's -- it's strange looking at a historical  
8 document of that magnitude and then finding your name in  
9 there. It was really bizaare, and while I was there looking  
10 at this and scratching my head and wondering, she said "Oh,  
11 by the way, would you like to see your father's dossier?"  
12 And I said "Well, how could I? You know, he was not  
13 Belgian," and that, you see how -- the entire German dossier  
14 for my father, from all the concentration camps, arrived such  
15 a time, left, died at 5:30 in the morning, and that's when  
16 everything else happened, you know, but strictly by accident.

17 Most people don't know that these places exist.  
18 You know, they -- they deported 30,000 Jews out of Belgium  
19 and those are the archives that were there, which were  
20 brought there after the Nuremberg trials, it was explained to  
21 me. They're all there. Floor to ceiling for as far as the  
22 eyes can see, nothing but wasted lives, and the Gestapo  
23 files, the card files, you know. One side furniture, people  
24 deported, people not deported. Totally blood-curdling.

25 Q IT SEEMS AMAZING THAT THE NAZIS DIDN'T DESTROY  
26 THOSE DOCUMENTS. THERE WERE SO MUCH DESTROYED IN THE CAMPS.

27 A Yeah. You know, from what I've read, there's also  
28 tremendous amount of pride and accomplishment. One thing

1       that I was left with very deeply, which needs to be said, is  
2       when you look at a small country such as Belgium, 30,000  
3       Jews, and there's an entire building of just paper just about  
4       that, written by the Germans, no German can ever say to me  
5       again "I didn't know it was happening." The person saying it  
6       may be telling the truth, but I'm not going to believe it  
7       because who kept those records? They may not have done the  
8       killing, they may not have grabbed the Jew off the street and  
9       put him in the oven. That's fine, I believe that, but when  
10      you see the extent of the recordkeeping --

11                I mean, who was my father, after all? One human  
12      being, very important to me, but not important to the world  
13      in that scheme of things, and to have a file this thick on  
14      just him, what did they have on everybody else is what I'm  
15      saying. You look at all that paperwork, you say "Now, wait a  
16      minute." Typewritten and very carefully manuscript. Not  
17      sloppy, you know, and each one with a printed tattoo number,  
18      you know, all tattooed. You know, they had stamps made with  
19      the tattoo and they were stamped on all those different  
20      papers so you knew who you were talking about. The logistics  
21      -- the clerical force must have outnumbered the Army, you  
22      know?

23                So Ken, Ken Schwartz, who made the documentary,  
24      KRON, said the bureaucracy of death is just incredible. Made  
25      him weak. When he asked me how I felt, I said, you know, if  
26      over the years, you ever thought of the word forgiveness, you  
27      come to a place like this, it disappears forever, because  
28      everybody was involved. I mean, this does not happen by

1       itself. As I looked at all those files -- come on.

2               But to go to the archives to look for your father  
3       is one thing, but to find him by accident is another. I  
4       almost had a heart attack. Not really, but, you know, it was  
5       just so overwhelming. I just went there to look for the  
6       Underground things.

7               So after that, I realized there is a monument to  
8       Jewish martyrs in Brussels, one block away from the school.  
9       It seems that it's all where I lived, and I've gone to it  
10      many, many times. The name is Monument Martyr  
11      the Jewish martyrs of Belgium. Well, to me, that means  
12      Belgians, right, the Jewish martyrs of Belgium. No, again,  
13      you see -- so when the Schwarzbart that I found there  
14      misspelled, Schwarzbart, F., at the time, I said "I wonder  
15      who this was. You know, may he or she rest in peace," but it  
16      had to be my father. Now I know, you see.

17              Q       WHEN YOU WERE STANDING AT THE TRAIN STATION AND THE  
18      MAN GAVE YOU A DESTINATION, WHAT WAS THE DESTINATION?

19              A       Jamoigne, the name of the little village, which was  
20      totally meaningless to me, but it was a thing I had to watch  
21      for and get off. Those names which are now so familiar were  
22      of course from a different world then. Small farming village  
23      in the Ardennes forest, not too far away by modern standards  
24      from the city of Bastogne where the Battle of the Bulge took  
25      place, you know. We were involved in the liberation, and --  
26      do you want some background on that?

27              Q       YES, PLEASE.

28              A       Belgium was involved in the war for a very short

1 time. Lost quite a few men, and Belgium really has an  
2 aristocratic government, you know, and they decided -- people  
3 in the government, the Princess of Marode and so forth,  
4 decided that something needed to be done to help the children  
5 of those Belgian officers who had either fallen in the short  
6 war or been made POW's, so they set up camps, if you will,  
7 summer camps, you know, residences for these children to  
8 leave the big cities, get away from the bad air and the  
9 possible bombings and so forth, but no persecution -- these  
10 were Belgians, you know -- and spend some time out in the  
11 country and the Committee for Jewish Defense -- Jewish  
12 Defense League I think they're called today, Committee  
13 Political France de Jewef -- all young people who are older  
14 people today, those that are still alive, approached the  
15 government and said "Give us permission to hide some Jews  
16 among those" and those people said yes, whoever they were,  
17 and that is how a number of us were smuggled into these  
18 camps, these safe places which were made up essentially of  
19 children of Belgian families whose father had been or was an  
20 officer in the Army, and the camp that I was sent to was a  
21 19th century castle, a little chateau in this village, had  
22 been run by Sisters of Charity, and they found two Belgians  
23 willing to head the home and take care of these children and  
24 they of course were also told that they would be hiding  
25 Jewish kids. That could not be done secretly without the  
26 knowledge of the person running the place, and this was a  
27 major and his wife, major -- his name was Tokay and his wife  
28 Marie Tokay, a childless couple who decided that -- he was of

1 course very active in the Resistance, I found out  
2 subsequently, maintaining his term of major. His rank,  
3 rather.

4 And they accepted to do this. What we know today  
5 of course is if any of us were caught, all these kids and all  
6 these people taking care of us would have been killed along  
7 with us and they were willing to do that, you know, so there  
8 are heroes left in the world, or saints. She took care of  
9 125 children during the war and among those 125 children,  
10 there were 83 Jews.

11 Q EIGHTY-THREE.

12 A That's a pretty good percentage, huh? It wasn't  
13 just a few among the others. I think the others were the  
14 few, which is really interesting, at least in our particular  
15 little home. You know, there were many of these throughout  
16 Belgium, and these were just boys. They didn't mix them, you  
17 know. This is just to facilitate the logistics of it.

18 We were run -- did you see , the  
19 movie? We were run as scouts. We were Boy Scouts. We were  
20 Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, depending upon our age, and this  
21 is how discipline was maintained among 125 young men. It was  
22 a fantastic idea, because you have -- you have morals, you  
23 have ethics, you have morale, you have things to do, you have  
24 discipline, you know. It was fantastic, so 30 young people  
25 who were hired there as teachers, many of whom were also  
26 hiding from the Germans, you know.

27 But they did not -- see, the secrecy was such,  
28 unlike the film that I just mentioned, I thought I was the



1       only Jewish kid and every other Jewish kid there thought he  
2       was the only Jewish kid, except the ones who were brothers.  
3       They knew there was another kid, but that's it.

4               And we didn't know -- I didn't know until two years  
5       ago -- that's 45 years later, give or take -- that there were  
6       any brothers there, you know. The Jewish kids didn't even  
7       let on that they were -- that this other kid was their  
8       brother and that's why we were saved, I think, you know.

9               The idea of getting up in the middle of the night  
10       and saying a prayer with a candle, I mean, it's so  
11       far-fetched. Or leaving your real name inside your book, you  
12       know. It may have happened, but I think, you know -- I guess  
13       this is staying here, but that Louis <sup>Malle</sup> ~~Malder~~ overstepped the  
14       boundaries of plausibility, you know, in his film, which you  
15       didn't see, but if you see it, you'll know what I'm talking  
16       about.

17               So, you know, I lived there for all that time under  
18       the name of Paul Estaing, and I became a Cub Scout leader and  
19       I was baptized and I became an altar boy and I became a very  
20       good Catholic, which I have stated must have been  
21       meaningless, you know, being a good Jew. After all, who was  
22       Jesus? He was a good Jew, right, a Rabbi, you know, and I'm  
23       not trying to be blasphemous or anything like that. I mean,  
24       we led a very straight life and all these other kids were  
25       good Catholics and there were -- so many of them were Jews.  
26       I was the only one baptized. Marie Tokay took a liking to me  
27       and she wanted to be sure that no matter what happened, I  
28       would be saved, and she had -- she became my godmother and

1 had me baptized. She had decided that if anything happened  
2 to my mother or my mother -- I would be her child after the  
3 war.

4 I didn't know that, you know. That's what she said  
5 two years ago. She didn't say it all these years either, you  
6 know. Two years ago was a very traumatic and important  
7 milestone in my life, and these young monitors, these young  
8 teachers, men and women, of course were much older than we  
9 were, but certainly no more than 10 years, you know, so as I  
10 meet them today, they're -- we're of the same age, you know,  
11 because those few years make no difference, but at the time,  
12 they were the adults and we were the kids.

13 The youngest -- the youngest Jewish kid was five  
14 years old, so there were little kids needing to take care  
15 of -- needing to be taken care of, and I think the oldest one  
16 was 14. So . . .

17 Q HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE AND HOW DID YOU FILL YOUR  
18 DAYS AT THE HOME?

19 A Well, as I indicated, I was there for two years and  
20 I was there from beginning of '43 -- May again -- until the  
21 liberation, which was in the fall of '44, September, October,  
22 and in the morning, we had classes. Many of these young  
23 monitors who took care of us were teachers or tried to be  
24 teachers, successfully, and tried to maintain our reading  
25 ability, our writing ability, basic math, that sort of thing,  
26 and so we had classes in the morning.

27 The idea was to always keep us busy. Again, I'm  
28 talking about with my present-day knowledge and looking back.

1 They did a fantastic job. There was no time to sit around  
2 and mope, twiddle your thumbs, and lots of playtime, but the  
3 playtime was organized. We were scouts, so after lunch,  
4 whatever lunch was -- Marie Tokay always managed to feed us  
5 something -- 125 kids is a big deal -- and keeping us  
6 clothed. I remember this, I remember pictures of nothing but  
7 socks hanging, you know.

8 And the discipline was rigorous, but gentle. In  
9 other words, you had to wash in the morning. You really --  
10 there were no showers, but you had to do a buddy bath at the  
11 sink, you know. So they kept us very clean and healthy and  
12 that was part of the routine, and after lunch, those scout  
13 troops went into the forest and we built our huts. We had  
14 our camps, you know, in the forest and so we had good  
15 exercise, the marching, the singing, you know, the  
16 discipline, the esprit de corps, all this very much under the  
17 heading of Catholic scouts.

18 So early in the morning, there was -- you know, we  
19 marched into the villages and we went to Mass and, you know,  
20 all this kept us not only very occupied but in a very  
21 positive way. It was really marvelous the way these people  
22 worked this out, keeping, you know -- trying to make us  
23 forget that so many of us were under the fear of death,  
24 although that was never supposed to be mentioned, because  
25 nobody knew about it, right?

26 You know, we were only visited by the Germans once.  
27 One morning, we woke up to sounds we weren't accustomed to,  
28 and looking out the window, the chateau was completely

1       surrounded and machine guns, everything, and it seemed like  
2       the entire German army was there. It was probably a small  
3       platoon, you know, but it seemed like the whole army was  
4       there with dogs and everything, and to this date, nobody  
5       knows why they came. They were -- they did not come for the  
6       kids or none of us would be here, you know.

7               Whether they -- someone had said "Go look there" or  
8       something, but one of the monitors -- and we only knew him as  
9       , because everybody had animal names. The grown-ups  
10      all had animal names after Kipling, you know, and -- although  
11      Kipling didn't have anybody named       , which meant sheep.

12      was very involved, we found out, with the Underground,  
13      and he left his bed and climbed up on the roof. Of course,  
14      the dogs got him down right away, so he was led away. We  
15      don't know whether they came looking for him or whether they  
16      took him because he tried to escape, and -- but I remember it  
17      as though it were yesterday, because I got so scared that I  
18      just wet my pants, you know.

19             And we all were lying on little cots side by side,  
20      you know. I mean just a sea of little bodies, and we had --  
21      they had made sacks which they filled with straw and that's  
22      what we slept on. Well, you know, that doesn't contain very  
23      much, so when I had my little accident, that just dripped on  
24      the floor, stone floor, and you could hear it like somebody  
25      was playing tympany, and two German soldiers had just come  
26      into the room and they heard it and they came right over to  
27      my bed and one of them bent down and he looked underneath,  
28      you know, and he got up and he started to really laugh quite

1 uproariously.

2 Of course, I understood German, but you don't let  
3 on. And he said "You know, this kid just peed his pants, you  
4 know." Maybe they were fathers and somebody thought it was  
5 so funny, and they just laughed and they walked away.

6 If he'd thrown back those covers, you know,  
7 everybody would have been killed, because, you know, only  
8 Jews were circumcised, not like here.

9 And --- and another time, I remember not coming to  
10 the chateau, but I was in the village and I saw German trucks  
11 in the village and I knew that my teacher, Paul, who had been  
12 my godfather when I was baptized and whom I loved dearly and  
13 still do, was at home, because he had -- he had married one  
14 of the other monitors and they both lived in that little  
15 house in the village rather than at the chateau with the rest  
16 of us, and somehow I just thought that I had to warn him that  
17 the Germans were there and I had never ridden a bicycle  
18 before, but there was a bike there and I rode -- that's the  
19 only time in my life I ever rode a bicycle.

20 I rode that bicycle to warn him. It turned out  
21 they weren't looking for anybody, you know. They were just  
22 going through the villages, but I got there in time to tell  
23 him and he could have gotten away if he had had to. I've  
24 never ridden a bike -- I'd never ridden one before or since.  
25 I don't think I've talked about it either. That's really  
26 bizarre.

27 Q WHOSE BICYCLE DID YOU FIND?

28 A I don't know. There was a bike there.

1           Q     JUST THERE?

2           A     I remember that so clearly. I'm short, you know,  
3     and that bike must have been very big for me, especially -- I  
4     was shorter then. Maybe it was a woman's bike. I don't  
5     remember, you know, without the crossbar, but that big street  
6     in the village. Just think, I could have broken my neck.

7                 That village was wonderful. I remember when I was  
8     an alter boy and I had to get to that really early Mass while  
9     everybody was still asleep, I had to get there and get  
10    dressed and help the priest get dressed and so forth. I  
11    couldn't wash at the chateau, so I remember going out into  
12    the village and in the wintertime, breaking the ice on the  
13    cow trough and washing in the street, because you didn't go  
14    to church unwashed, you know.

15                So we stayed healthy, you know. We really stayed  
16    healthy, both mentally and physically, and then in 1944, all  
17    that time of course no news from anybody, and they -- the war  
18    became a remote thing and you didn't really talk about it  
19    very much -- in our case, self-defense, of course -- and one  
20    morning, it was 1944, a lot of explosions, a lot of noise and  
21    we all went outside and the Germans had posted two tanks  
22    behind the chateau as being a children's home, good  
23    protection, but the Americans didn't know there was a  
24    children's home, so they shot back anyway.

25                But it didn't really matter, because we were out in  
26    the open watching, and you know, that's my -- my only  
27    experience being in a battle, you know, with the bullets  
28    whistling by and the shells exploding and even the teachers

1        were so struck by what was going on, they forgot to tell us  
2        to get in and take cover.

3                And then the tanks left. I think one got shot up,  
4        but I don't know, I think they both left and then up the  
5        alleys -- the alley; not the alleys, the alley, the big  
6        avenues -- came the Jeeps. Now, behind the chateau runs the  
7        River Semois, and the Semois River is known for its wonderful  
8        fishing. I did some fishing there myself with a stick and a  
9        bent needle or something, and why I'm telling you this is  
10       that all the boys -- we watched -- we watched the Jeeps come  
11       in and we said "My God, even the Americans know about the  
12       fishing. They brought their fishing poles." We had never  
13       seen antennas like this, you know, on the Jeeps, and we  
14       thought they came with their fishing poles. It's maybe a  
15       little silly, but it made sense to us, you know, "The  
16       reputation of our river, you know, has gone even to America."

17               And they came and the Germans -- there were German  
18       troops in the field and the soldiers got out and they were  
19       just standing there literally next to us shooting back, you  
20       know. There was a battle going on. Only lasted about half a  
21       day and it was -- what a wonderful day it was. I remember  
22       watching the soldiers walking on either side of the road, you  
23       know, just the way they walk and in the middle occasionally,  
24       a German, you know, with someone from the Resistance walking  
25       behind him holding him at like knifepoint or something. It  
26       was a great day, yes, especially for kids to watch that sort  
27       of thing, you know, the Germans are getting it now. You  
28       know?

1           Little silly, maybe, but it's wonderful. It's  
2           wonderful, and going down to the -- the American bivouacs and  
3           getting some of their rations, you know, and they also gave  
4           us -- they would throw all these packages after they emptied  
5           them, you know, those khaki packages, cans and packages which  
6           were covered with a khaki wax which we then took and scraped  
7           off and made candles out of. You know that wax. Yeah, we  
8           didn't miss anything, and they were very good to us and we  
9           ate like we hadn't eaten before, because these were "K" and  
10          stuff rations, which the soldiers wrinkled their nose up, but  
11          to us, they were a feast.

12                 Then as they moved inland and Brussels was  
13          liberated and I found out that Brussels had been liberated, I  
14          spoke to Marie Tokay -- I was 11 years old -- 11 and a half,  
15          and I said "I want to go home." I don't remember the  
16          conversation, you know, but -- and she gave me permission and  
17          I left by myself and I hitchhiked -- I don't remember much  
18          about the hitchhiking, but I got to Brussels and I got to my  
19          neighborhood and then I ran into my mother on the street.  
20          Yeah.

21                 It was a great day. She told me years later that  
22          the enormous joy of seeing me -- we recognized each other,  
23          you know. We started running to each other. But she told me  
24          years later I think even here in the United States that the  
25          joy of the moment was somehow darkened or lessened, but she  
26          never said anything about it. On my belt I was wearing a  
27          cross about this big, which one of the nuns had given to me  
28          and of which I was very proud, I may add, you know, and she



1 saw that on my belt. She said it gave her heart quite a  
2 twist, but she was too intelligent to say anything.

3 Well, "And now we can wait for Pappa's return," she  
4 said. It was a long wait.

5 Q YOU NEVER WENT BACK TO THE HOME; YOU STAYED IN  
6 BELGIUM?

7 A Yes, yes, yes, I took my mother to visit it after  
8 the liberation. She had already been liberated, of course,  
9 and we went back to look at it. Stayed there for a while. I  
10 wanted her to meet everybody. Most people whom I'd been  
11 closely associated with had left by then and it was -- it had  
12 become just a home for children, you know. It was no longer  
13 a hiding place, of course. Marie Tokay was still there. She  
14 ran it for a while until it was closed. Today it's a  
15 geriatrics home. In a sense, it's very sad, you know. It  
16 was always very joyful. Today, it's a very quiet, very sad  
17 place, you know. It's old people come there to die, you  
18 know.

19 All the nuns are dead. I never saw any of the nuns  
20 again. They're all dead. They were older women and they all  
21 hopefully went to their reward. They earned it.

22 The young priest who taught me catechism and so  
23 forth and made me an altar boy was there two years ago in his  
24 late 70's and it was wonderful to see him. I walked up to  
25 him and he said "Paul." After 45 years, that's not bad.

26 And he died right after that. He had throat  
27 cancer, and Marie Tokay died last Christmas. I saw her  
28 husband after -- I saw them -- her husband, and I saw her

1 before we came to the United States and I had seen her a  
2 number of times, because, you know, we stayed in  
3 correspondence, of course, and I saw her whenever I went to  
4 Europe, but then he -- he died.

5 Paul Jolis is still a professor at the University  
6 of Brussels. He's -- he's in his 70's now. He's told me  
7 he's thinking of retiring, and it was an -- it was incredible  
8 meeting all those boys again after 45 years, and meeting them  
9 as Jews. Forty-four of us met two years ago, just -- just  
10 Jews, you know. Just -- and that's really how I found out  
11 about all of this, because up to that time, I didn't know it.  
12 And it was organized by one of the kids who had been five  
13 years old at the time, and his story was interesting, one  
14 aspect of it, because he was so young when he was brought  
15 there that when his father -- he was lucky; his father picked  
16 him up after the war. He didn't know who that man was, you  
17 know. But his parents survived. He was lucky.

18 Q WERE YOU PARTICULARLY CLOSE WITH ANY OF THE  
19 CHILDREN?

20 A Yeah, I was. You know, you form friendships and at  
21 the reunion, a number of them brought up some details, you  
22 know, about our friendship which I really hadn't thought  
23 about in 45 years, but made a lot of sense and sounded so  
24 true, and one of them, who I will not mention his name, but I  
25 just thought, today he's a psychiatrist, and he said he's  
26 never forgiven me all these years for always outdoing him in  
27 the eyes of Paul Jolis, our mentor, you know, and he was  
28 absolutely serious. Not the not forgiving thing, but the

1 fact we'd had this rivalry going.

2 It's interesting for a person in the field of  
3 psychology and psychiatry to have suffered from something  
4 like that, you know? But Paul said I was always the best. I  
5 tried hard, you know. I wanted to be the best scout and the  
6 best one in class, and I think it's something my parents had  
7 instilled in me. Not for shining, but for succeeding, you  
8 know? Not for -- not for praise. My father always said that  
9 the praise was not important. It was welcome when it came,  
10 but not important. It's what it had made you feel about  
11 yourself that was important. I tried to pass that onto my  
12 students and our children.

13 Q THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOME TIME IN THE CHILDREN'S  
14 HOME FOR YOU TO THINK ABOUT YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER AND  
15 PERHAPS ABOUT YOUR JUDAISM AND THE CONFLICT.

16 A I thought about my parents literally constantly,  
17 especially in the evening when, you know, lights out sort of  
18 thing. Lots of time to think. But not -- I don't remember  
19 thinking about Judaism very much other than "I'm a Jew," you  
20 know. I mean, it's -- that's very -- it's very, very simple.  
21 There's no if, no maybe, you know, and I know what I'm doing  
22 today and I know what I'll be doing if I survive, but I  
23 didn't think about Judaism.

24 Does that answer your question?

25 Q LET ME ASK YOU ANOTHER ONE. DID ANY OF THE BOYS  
26 NOTICE THAT SOME OF THE CHILDREN WERE CIRCUMSIZED, SOME OF  
27 THE CHILDREN WERE NOT CIRCUMSIZED?

28 A No. We were extremely careful to the point of

1 making no mistakes. You never took your underpants off. You  
2 simply -- no. Which is not as easy as it sounds, you know.

3 Q IT DOESN'T SOUND EASY AT ALL.

4 A Except that you see, we didn't have baths and  
5 showers. We bathed, you know, at the sink, you know.  
6 They're called sponge baths, but we didn't have sponges, you  
7 know. So I suppose that made it easier, you know, thinking  
8 back, and swimming in the river, you know, we kept our  
9 underpants on. Rigorous Catholic thing, so there was a lot  
10 of modesty involved, which helped. It simply helped. Very  
11 matter-of-fact, you know.

12 Q CAN YOU TELL ME NOW HOW YOUR MOTHER WAS WHEN YOU  
13 FOUND HER, WHAT CONDITION? WAS SHE STILL IN THE SAME  
14 APARTMENT?

15 A Yes. She had -- she did stay absolutely. She  
16 stuck to her convictions and she said, you know, "If I'm  
17 taken away, I'll be taken away no matter where I am and I'll  
18 stay here" and she did. She stayed there. I never saw the  
19 other woman again, because I imagine she either fled or was  
20 taken away by the Resistance, you know, because those  
21 collaborators were dealt with very quickly and I got there  
22 after the liberation, so she was already gone. We never  
23 talked about her. The apartment just stayed empty.

24 It was a great rejoicing. It's something that if  
25 you haven't participated in it, you can't know it, and I hope  
26 you never know it, you know, the rejoicing of being liberated  
27 after the Occupation and when all these things were coming  
28 out, you know, and realizing what you'd really survived.

1           To give you an example of that was -- I can give  
2   you several. Of course, after the liberation, the Germans  
3   started sending over the V-1's and the V-2's, you know, the  
4   rocket bombs which were meant for England, but so many of  
5   them fell on Belgium. They killed more of the civilian  
6   population between the liberation and the end of the war than  
7   the war, you know, those rockets.

8           But we'd seen enough. We'd seen too much and I  
9   remember my mother saying, you know, when the sirens went  
10  off, the air raid thing, "Come on." I'd crawl in bed with  
11  her and we'd cover our faces so we wouldn't be blinded by  
12  glass. Killed, okay, but you don't want to be blinded, but  
13  we didn't go to shelters anymore or anything like that.  
14  Forget it. We'd been through enough. So if it comes, it  
15  comes, you know. That's how people felt, and the other thing  
16  was when they did the Battle of the Bulge, when the Germans  
17  did the counterattack and were killing everything in their  
18  path, you know, all the villagers that had helped the  
19  Americans, every man, women and child, everyone was executed,  
20  people in the capital were saying, you know, if the Germans  
21  come back to Brussels, mass suicide. Nobody was going to go  
22  through that again, and that I shall never forget, you know,  
23  because people were serious. People were serious.

24           Q     DID YOU AND YOUR MOTHER ACTUALLY DISCUSS THAT?

25           A     Everyone was talking about it. We didn't discuss  
26  it on a one-to-one and say "Okay, we're going to do this" or  
27  "We're going to do that," but it was understood that  
28  something would be done, right.

1                   We are -- we re-applied for our visa in 1945, as  
2                   soon as the consulate re-opened at the end -- as soon as the  
3                   war was over, and we waited and we inquired and, you know,  
4                   the Red Cross and everything, about my father. Absolutely no  
5                   news. We didn't find out until the late 50's that he was  
6                   dead. My mother kept hoping he was alive all those years.  
7                   Somewhere, you know, maybe in Russia, somewhere. To her, it  
8                   was very important to think that he was alive, even if she  
9                   couldn't have him, that he was alive somewhere, and he was  
10                  alive for such a long time.

11                 Q     HOW DID YOU FINALLY GET WORD THAT HE WAS --

12                 A     We had an attorney here who worked with a couple of  
13                  attorneys in Germany and they sent us the exact information  
14                  that I found in the archives, so I think what we paid a great  
15                  deal of money for, they probably just got off one of those  
16                  pieces of paper for nothing, but that's another thing.

17                 Q     HOW HAD YOUR MOTHER SURVIVED THE WAR? HOW HAD SHE  
18                  LIVED HER LIFE AFTER YOUR --

19                 A     She kept working for the Estaing family, you know,  
20                  to pay off the -- my using the name, and at night, she'd go  
21                  to the apartment and sleep and in the morning, she'd go back  
22                  to work. Wonderful people, because everyone knew that she  
23                  worked there, you know, and if anything had happened to her,  
24                  that family would no longer be in existence today, either.

25                 Q     I WAS GOING TO ASK YOU: WERE THERE KIND OF RACIAL  
26                  LAWS IN BELGIUM DURING THE OCCUPATION?

27                 A     Oh, yeah. Yeah, cut and dry.

28                 Q     SO YOU COULDN'T EMPLOY A JEW?

1           A     No, no, no, no, dear lord, no. You know, I talked  
2     to -- I talked to many schools about this, of course, and I  
3     was asking -- I always ask the young people, especially, when  
4     you think about all the people who in my case helped me, you  
5     know, is there a common link, and the kids always catch it  
6     right away. They say "They were all teachers, you know." I  
7     said "Love your teachers, it's a wonderful profession." But  
8     it's true, so many of the people -- I mean, even the priest,  
9     you know, was a teacher and so forth. Certainly Marie Tokay  
10    and Paul, all these people. They -- they all squarely put  
11    their lives on the block, but all of them say the same thing  
12    when asked the question, you know, "Why?" "You know, because  
13    it needed to be done."

14                I'm very close to the children of the Estaing  
15    family and both Andre and her husband George are dead now,  
16    but I talk to them. You know, "Did you guys sit around the  
17    dinner table and talk about what your parents had done and  
18    what it had meant to the family and what would have  
19    happened?" He said "Oh, we talked about it, of course we  
20    talked about it," but the gist of it is they never thought  
21    they did anything special, see?

22                And I hear this from every righteous gentile. Two  
23    of my favorite words in the English language are righteous  
24    gentile. I think that's such a wonderful name. These people  
25    should be canonized.

26                Righteous in the -- in the deepest and best sense  
27    of the word, you know. These people, whether they did it for  
28    religious reasons or not, really lived Christianity, you

1 know. They're really the example of what being a Christian  
2 is supposed to be, you know. Whether they did it for that  
3 purpose, that reason or not, and that's very important to me  
4 to get that message out, especially to young people, you  
5 know, that don't forget what was done during that war, but  
6 don't forget the people who tried to help. They're extremely  
7 important.

8           Someone said -- I forget who, but someone said if  
9 you talk about the people who saved, you remind people that  
10 there are no heroes without villains, so it goes without  
11 saying that you also condemn the German people for what they  
12 have done, and I brought up the idea of forgiveness earlier,  
13 and it's very clear I think in Jewish dogma and theology that  
14 you can only forgive a wrong that was done to you directly,  
15 so I shall never forgive them for what they did to my father,  
16 because only he can do that.

17           And for me, what they did to me, I'm not that big a  
18 person. No, I don't forgive them.

19           Q     DID YOUR MOTHER EVER FORGIVE THE GERMANS?

20           A     No, no. I -- my mother and my father, to her -- to  
21 my mother, she was part of my father. She was a very  
22 beautiful lady, physically as well as mentally and  
23 emotionally. She never remarried. She never looked at  
24 another man, because my father was it.

25           So what had happened to him happened to her, you  
26 see, in a sense.

27           Q     WHEN DID YOU FINALLY GET PERMISSION TO COME TO THE  
28 UNITED STATES?



1           A     In the fall of '48. We had to wait three years.  
2           That was the standard waiting time. So we came in December  
3           '48. We picked a monsoon period of the Atlantic to cross it.  
4           Nine days tossed around like a -- I don't get a name. You  
5           get the image.

6           Q     NINE MISERABLE DAYS, I TAKE IT?

7           A     Five miserable days. Four interesting days and  
8           five miserable days when you pray for deliverance all over  
9           again. In this case, meaning death, please.

10           It was -- oh, my mother was able to afford -- I'm  
11           amazed in retrospect that she could do all these things. I  
12           mean, she worked day and night, you know, for -- and she got  
13           us two tickets on the -- on a Norwegian freighter out of Le  
14           Havre to New York.

15           Q     THAT'S A CREATIVE SOLUTION.

16           A     Yeah, 12 passengers. But that tells you the size  
17           of the boat. It was no ship. It was a boat, you know.  
18           But -- and seeing the Statue of Liberty is everything it's  
19           cut out to be. Oh, that just -- again, after 41 years, I  
20           cannot forget my first glimpse of the lady in the harbor. We  
21           arrived at night and I didn't see her, but next morning, I  
22           saw her. We have to stay at anchor for Customs to come  
23           aboard. This was after Ellis Island and so forth. They just  
24           came aboard and checked all the papers and everything.

25           Q     WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS WHEN YOU SAW THE GIANT  
26           OUTSTRETCHED ARM?

27           A     A new life, without forgetting the old, and a new  
28           place to wait for Pappa. That was always foremost in our

1 thoughts, you know, and Pappa would find us because that was  
2 our original plan, come to the United States, you know, and  
3 he would remember where my uncle lived. My uncle lived in  
4 Petaluma.

5 Q OH. CHICKEN FARMER, BY ANY CHANCE?

6 A Viennese psychologist, chicken farmer. Absolutely.  
7 Absolutely.

8 So my -- after New York, where we stayed for almost  
9 two and a half months so that both my mother and I could  
10 learn English, and then when we felt confident that we could  
11 communicate, then we came west, Chicago to Oakland, five days  
12 on the train and then the trip to Petaluma, which was a long  
13 trip through the open fields and cows and stuff, you know.  
14 San Rafael was a small little Greyhound bus stop. All the  
15 farms. Bit of a culture shock. And Petaluma Junior High.

16 Q THIS IS WHERE YOU WENT TO SCHOOL?

17 A Mm-hm.

18 Q AND YOU GOT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA?

19 A No. I went to Petaluma Junior High March, April --  
20 April, May, June of '49, graduated, and then my mother and I  
21 came to San Francisco and I went to George Washington High,  
22 11 and 12th grade.

23 Q HOW DID YOU GET BACK IN TOUCH WITH YOUR JUDAISM,  
24 YOUR JEWISH ROOTS, AFTER THE WAR? OR DID YOU?

25 A Oh, yes. But again, with my mother, it was, you  
26 know, we are Jews, this is a Jewish home. There was no  
27 discussion. Things just went right back to where they were  
28 supposed to be.

1 Q WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CROSS ON YOUR BELT?

2 A I -- I kept it for the longest time. It -- I think  
3 it disappeared in the trip over here. I mean, getting ready.  
4 I don't know what happened to it and that -- as a matter of  
5 fact, I've never thought about it until your question.

6 All the other souvenirs have been very dear to me  
7 and I've kept, you know -- my godfather Paul when I was  
8 baptized, his present to me was a prayer book beautifully  
9 inscribed, which I of course still have, and he made me --  
10 being our scoutmaster, he made me a -- he handmade a book of  
11 rules of life, what to do to be a good human being. It's  
12 hand-painted, handwritten, bound in leather by him, and I  
13 took it back to show him -- to show him that I had it and it  
14 stayed in my pocket and I forgot all about it and I never did  
15 show it to him. I'll have to wait for another trip someday.

16 Q WHAT WERE SOME OF HIS RULES?

17 A You know, they were based of course on Catholic  
18 behavior, but they are universal, you know, about honesty and  
19 straightforwardness and that -- that sort of thing.

20 Q WHAT A TREASURE.

21 A Yeah, yeah, a great treasure. Very, very  
22 beautiful, both physically beautiful and beautiful in intent  
23 and content.

24 I've been blessed all my life with meeting these  
25 wonderful human beings. Out of tragedy comes -- come very  
26 positive things. I mean, I would rather have met them a  
27 different way, but . . .

28 Q YOU WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL AND DID YOU GO TO COLLEGE

1       HERE?

2           A     Yes.

3           Q     WHERE?

4           A     I went to UC-Berkeley.

5           Q     STUDYING WHAT SUBJECT?

6           A     Well, I applied to medical school. You know, we  
7       need another good Jewish doctor, and I applied to UC and  
8       Stanford. I wasn't accepted by either. I don't think it  
9       was -- well, my grades were good. There was a Jewish quota  
10      in those days, you know, and there were many, many  
11      applicants. For whatever reason, or my own shortcomings, I  
12      didn't get accepted right away and instead of waiting another  
13      year and trying again, I went in a different direction and  
14      I've never really regretted it. I became a teacher. Maybe I  
15      would have been a professor of medical science, because I  
16      think I've always wanted to teach.

17                My -- my mentors, the people who led the way, were  
18      all teachers and I think they instilled in me the desire to  
19      share knowledge and help along those lines. So now, it's my  
20      35th year of teaching.

21           Q     AT THE UNIVERSITY?

22           A     Well, I did 29 years at the high school level and  
23      I've always taught at the university along with it, but  
24      that's all I do now. That's all. It's like just being a  
25      housewife.

26           Q     IT'S NOT -- IT SHOULD BE ENOUGH FOR ANYONE, I  
27      THINK, TO TEACH.

28                DID YOU MARRY AND --

1           A     Yes. We've been married 20 years and we have two  
2     beautiful sons, one who just turned 16 and one who will turn  
3     15 next month, and they were bar mitzvahed together. That  
4     was one of the greatest days of my life, when they were bar  
5     mitzvahed together. They were -- you know, they're 15 months  
6     apart, so I spoke to the rabbi and said "Emotionally and  
7     financially, to do this two years in a row is just too much.  
8     They're so close, and what do you think of pushing one,  
9     holding one back a little," and he said "Wonderful idea."

10           And all our family and friends appreciated it,  
11     especially those who came from a certain distance. Not just  
12     to do it two years in a row. You know, after three years,  
13     you do it again, okay, but one year after the other --  
14     everyone loved the idea that they did it together, and they  
15     were each given their full complement of work, not cut in  
16     half, so the ceremony lasted twice as long and no one seemed  
17     to mind and it was a marvelous day. It was -- it was great.

18           My wife is a violinist with the San Francisco  
19     Symphony, so there's a lot of music in the house. Kvetching  
20     and things, too. You know. That means yelling, okay?  
21     Right.

22           Q     IT'S NOT ALL SWEET VIOLIN SERENADES, YOU'RE SAYING?

23           A     When she plays, it's always sweet, yes.

24           Q     I THINK THERE ARE MANY JEWISH VIOLINISTS. I THINK  
25     IT'S A PROUD TRADITION.

26           A     It is a proud tradition. It's a beautiful  
27     instrument.

28           Q     AND YOU LIVE NOW IN SAN RAFAEL?

1           A     Yes.

2           Q     IF YOU DON'T MIND, CAN I -- WHEN YOU WENT BACK, HOW  
3 DID IT COME THAT YOU -- THE FIRST TIME YOU WENT BACK TO  
4 BELGIUM, WAS IT TO LOOK IN THE ARCHIVES, OR DID YOU TAKE THIS  
5 TRIP TO GO BACK AND LOOK AT THE ARCHIVES AND GO TO THE  
6 REUNION ALL AT THE SAME TIME?

7           A     You're talking about 1988?

8           Q     YES.

9           A     No. In 1988, at the beginning of the year, it  
10 seems like -- it seems such a long time ago and it's not. I  
11 received a letter from David Inevlocki, whom I didn't know  
12 from Adam, and the letter said -- well, first of all, I saw  
13 the address and it said Jamoigne, and I literally had to sit  
14 down because in all those years -- I had gone back to  
15 Jamoigne, I even took my family and we just went as tourists  
16 and I said "This is the chateau." You know, we met a couple  
17 of the sisters who were there, but no one we knew, you know,  
18 and I said this is -- we went in and I said "Look, I slept  
19 over here and the Germans came through this door" and so  
20 forth and the kids were duly impressed, you know, and my wife  
21 was -- everyone was very interested. It was a pilgrimage,  
22 but that's it.

23                   So when I saw that letter, and in the letter, I was  
24 told "Well, you know, there's a reunion in the offing of all  
25 the Jewish boys who were hidden here." You said "What do you  
26 mean, all the Jewish boys? All of me?" But it had a list of  
27 all the names. On one side, the war names and on the other  
28 side, the real names and that's when -- you see, two years

1       ago when I realized that this was not nearly so simple as I  
2       had thought.

3               And I went to the reunion. Channel 4 heard about  
4       it and they asked whether they could accompany me, ostensibly  
5       to film the reunion. I didn't know they were planning a  
6       documentary on my life, and that is where all this happened.  
7       When I met this Andre Escovitze, she said "No, no, no, I'm  
8       sure that you were part of the Underground plan. Go to the  
9       archives." I was, you know -- so one thing led to another  
10      and this is how -- how it all happened.

11             MS. SILVERMAN: YOU'VE COVERED MOST OF MY QUESTIONS,  
12      EXCEPT ONE TINY MINOR LITTLE QUESTION I JUST HAD.

13             Q       I WAS CURIOUS TO KNOW, WHO ARE THE GUIDES THAT LED  
14      PEOPLE OUT OF -- FROM GERMANY INTO BELGIUM? WHO WERE THESE  
15      PEOPLE THAT DID THAT AND --

16             A       Oh. Well, totally anonymous people, of course.

17             Q       RIGHT'.

18             A       People who knew -- people who lived in those towns  
19      and knew the way across the border and for the most part,  
20      they were making a fast buck.

21             Q       RIGHT', SO IT WAS NOT --

22             A       I'm not being cynical, but really, that's what it  
23      was. Some took the money and ran. Others helped people  
24      across. Other turned them in I understand. You know --  
25      Sure, and some who really were making an effort to help  
26      people and in the process, helping themselves a little bit,  
27      which they deserved, you know, to be paid for it.

28             Q       RIGHT'.

1 A I don't begrudge them that.

2 Q WAS THERE ANY QUOTA ON THE MONEY YOU COULD TAKE OUT  
3 OF GERMANY? WERE YOU LIMITED TO TEN MARKS?

4 A Since we were leaving illegally, if you had money,  
5 you took it. We just didn't have any.

6 Q RIGHT, RIGHT.

7 A But there was -- if there had been a control, we  
8 wouldn't have been allowed to leave.

9 Q THEY WERE CONTROLLED, RIGHT. RIGHT.

10 A The people who earlier than that who were allowed  
11 to leave legally, I think there was a control.

12 Q RIGHT. RIGHT.

13 A But for us, we were actually sneaking --

14 Q OUT?

15 A -- sneaking out and that's why I said, I don't know  
16 how my mother managed to pay the second guide, but she did.

17 MS. HARRIS:

18 Q LET ME ASK YOU, DID YOU EVER GO TO BUCHENWALD?

19 A I have not set foot in any of the occupied  
20 countries belonging to Germany. When I've gone back to  
21 Europe, I've gone to Belgium and I've gone to France. I have  
22 not gone to the Vichy part of France. We honeymooned in  
23 Israel and that's it. This -- this -- the end of the summer,  
24 my wife and the San Francisco Symphony are going to Germany  
25 and she has to go.

26 Q ARE YOU GOING TO GO?

27 A And I had thought about accompanying her just so  
28 that she wouldn't have that experience alone, but we simply



1 can't afford it.

2 Q HOW DO YOU FEEL -- AS LONG AS WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT  
3 OF GERMANY, THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF GERMANY IN THE NEWS LATELY.

4 A Yes, there has.

5 Q THE REUNIFICATION. AS A SURVIVOR, SOMEONE WHO LOST  
6 FAMILY AND WHO WAS IN HIDING DURING THE WAR, ARE YOU  
7 CONCERNED ABOUT THE TALK ABOUT REUNIFYING GERMANY?

8 A Very much. There is just no question in my mind.  
9 When -- when everyone was jumping up and down with glee, I  
10 was perspiring cold sweat. My palms get wet just thinking  
11 about it. I'm very concerned, very worried, and your  
12 question of course is very interesting. I was at a in  
13 Redwood City a few weeks ago, the young people -- the cantor  
14 had asked me to come and watch -- show them the documentary  
15 and speak and one of those little tykes asked me that  
16 question and after I got over the fact that "What an  
17 intelligent question for a young person," and I answered it,  
18 you know, the same way, and the young people -- young people  
19 are so bright. They really understood, and we talked about  
20 it for a long time. I talk about it with my friends. Most  
21 of the people whom I call my friends understand and I think  
22 they are concerned, too, for the same reasons.

23 I am -- I am happy that there can be a renewal of  
24 liberty in the world, of course, but that's a theoretical  
25 happiness. When it happens to the Germans, I'm worried.  
26 I -- I can be rational all I want to. I think when it comes  
27 to Germany and Germans, my emotions are stronger than my  
28 rationale.

1           Q     SO EVEN THOUGH MOST OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE INVOLVED  
2     IN THE WAR ARE AGING OR DEAD AT THIS POINT, YOU STILL CAN'T  
3     FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH THE REUNIFICATION?

4           A     Do you remember when we saw the cameras on the wall  
5     and the young people -- the young people, not the old Nazis,  
6     but the young people climbing on the wall. What did they  
7     immediately sing? Deutschland, Deutschland,  
8     I think I got a couple of extra gray hairs just watching  
9     that, without being dramatic.

10          Q     I WANT TO GO BACK TO ONE OTHER THING. THE DAY YOUR  
11     UNCLE WAS -- HIS BUILDING WAS EMPTIED OUT. DO YOU RECALL THE  
12     DEPORTATION, HOW PEOPLE IN BRUSSELS WERE ACTUALLY ROUNDED UP  
13     AND --

14          A     Oh, yes. Yeah. You mean the physical rounding up?  
15     There was several ways the Germans did it that I witnessed.  
16     You know, they would either bring trucks to the front of a  
17     building, the soldiers and the dogs would run in and they'd  
18     bang on all the doors and everybody was pulled out, whatever  
19     state they were in, and simply run downstairs.

20                 This happened in moments, you know, just like that,  
21     and the building was empty and the trucks left and as though  
22     it had never happened. Other times, especially during rush  
23     hour, their equivalent of rush hour, they would seal off a  
24     couple of streets with the trucks and everyone who was on the  
25     street, on the streetcar there, was pushed onto the trucks  
26     and they were gone.

27          Q     AND YOUR UNCLE'S BUILDING WAS CLEARED OUT IN THAT  
28     WAY?

1           A     Yeah.

2           Q     HOW MANY RELATIVES DID YOU HAVE LIVING IN THAT --  
3     DOWN THE STREET?

4           A     I can't give you numbers, but his father, his  
5     mother, his sisters, some relatives by marriage. Oh, it's  
6     easy a dozen, you know.

7           Q     HOW DID YOU -- DID YOU NEED ANY EXPLANATION AT THE  
8     TIME OF WHAT HAPPENED? YOU WERE PROBABLY ABOUT SEVEN.

9           A     By the time this was happening, I'd seen it happen  
10    over and over and over again and no, no. An overwhelming  
11    feeling was "It's not -- it's not I." Overwhelming feeling  
12    of sadness, but at that time, no feeling "I shall never see  
13    them again." No, no, they're going -- they're going to go  
14    through some hardship.

15                I don't think I even questioned the very old  
16    people, ever seeing them again, you know, because when you're  
17    that young, old doesn't mean that much. His parents were  
18    very old.

19                By the way, I must say even on tape whenever you  
20    use this, any reference to this may not be made public,  
21    because he -- he does not even know that I found the names in  
22    the archives and his wife does not want him to know.

23           Q     OKAY.

24           A     My uncle.

25           Q     YOUR UNCLE?

26           A     Okay. He lives still right here in the county and  
27    so, you notice that in the documentary, there are no  
28    references made. I have all the documentation. I'm sitting

1 on it.

2 Q I SEE. OKAY.

3 A She does not want him to know. He knows that his  
4 whole family, everybody is dead. She does not want him to  
5 know that they were all gassed. He may guess, but he  
6 shouldn't know, and I have to respect that, you know. But  
7 it's part of the history, I want it told.

8 Q YOU ALSO HAD AUNTS AND ONE GRANDPARENT LEFT IN  
9 VIENNA.

10 A Right, my father had four sisters. Two were taken  
11 away to camps and never heard from again. One went to  
12 Palestine and one is the one who came to the United States  
13 with her husband very early and she's still alive with him.

14 Q YOUR MOTHER HAD ONE SISTER.

15 A My mother had a mother and a sister. My maternal  
16 grandmother went to England and spent the war making uniforms  
17 for the soldiers, which she was very proud of, and she made  
18 it to New York before we did and we met again there. And so  
19 we lived together until her death 20 years ago.

20 My mother's sister went to Siam and Israel -- well,  
21 first she went to Israel and then Siam, so my cousin was a  
22 sabra, and we saw them, the three of them again after the  
23 war.

24 1969 was a -- an incredibly bizaare year. That's  
25 only 20 years ago. In 1969, my Aunt Rose, my mother's  
26 sister, died from a brain hemorrhage and my grandmother who  
27 was getting quite old by then kept saying to me "I've lost my  
28 child. I've lost Sitty." Sitty is what she called my

1 mother. My mother's name was Sarah, but they called her  
2 Sitty, because my mother had been ill for all these years  
3 with rheumatoid arthritis and confined to her bed.

4 So my grandmother never thought of Rose as dying  
5 and she was convinced that Sitty had died. She knew she lost  
6 a child, so they spoke on the phone and she never realized  
7 that she'd lost a child, because -- and right after that, she  
8 died. 1969 is also the year that I met my wife and so she  
9 knew my mother that year, and we married in December and nine  
10 days later, my mother died. We were honeymooning, as it was,  
11 and the phone rang about 5:30 in the morning, a woman said  
12 "Mr. Schwarzbart," which I thought strange, because here in  
13 America, they always say "Paul," even if they don't know you.  
14 "This is the nurse at the hospital. Your mother died last  
15 night."

16 So they almost had another case on their hands, and  
17 then that Christmas, my aunt, the one, Rose, who died, her  
18 daughter, the sabra who was married to an Israeli and they  
19 had two beautiful Israeli children, they lived in Paris,  
20 because he was attached to the Israeli embassy, they went  
21 skiing and they were all killed in a car accident.

22 So the year where I started my life over, lost  
23 everybody else. Excuse me.

24 Q DID YOUR MOTHER EVER TALK ABOUT THE WAR AND ABOUT  
25 YOUR FATHER? WERE YOU EVER ABLE TO DISCUSS THOSE?

26 A All the time, yeah. We talked about -- we  
27 literally talked about him constantly.

28 Not so much the war as Pappa. Pappa was --

1       literally until the day she died, Pappa was part of our life,  
2       yeah. Until the 50's, you know, with a great deal of hope  
3       and wondering where this man, perhaps an amnesiac, was  
4       existing and after that, you know, just Pappa the way we  
5       remember him.

6               Q       AND HER YEARS ON HER OWN, DID SHE TALK ABOUT HOW  
7       SHE SURVIVED AND WHAT IT WAS LIKE LIVING IN BELGIUM BY  
8       HERSELF DURING THE OCCUPATION?

9               A       The fear and the deprivations, even though she  
10      worked for a family that was very caring and so forth, yes,  
11      of course she did, and the fear and emptiness of my being  
12      away and being so very much alone and realizing that  
13      probability of not seeing either one of us again was very  
14      great. Much more so than I felt when I was away, because I  
15      felt I would see them all again.

16               She was of course much more realistic.

17               Q       SOMETIMES THAT'S THE MERCY OF BEING A CHILD, NOT  
18      REALLY KNOWING.

19               A       It really is, yes. Even though you know  
20      everything, there's some things that you refuse to believe,  
21      yes.

22               Q       IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD THAT WE  
23      HAVEN'T TOUCHED ON?

24               A       About the details, I think I've told everything  
25      that needs to be known, the reality of what happened and the  
26      people who extended their hands and gave of themselves to  
27      help.

28               Perhaps I should say that I'm grateful to you for

1       doing this and making sure that the revisionists do not win  
2       out, and my father was not the figment of someone's  
3       imagination. He really existed and he really did die because  
4       of this, and so this is very important to me.

5               I thank you.

6           Q       THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME.

7               (End of tape.)

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